

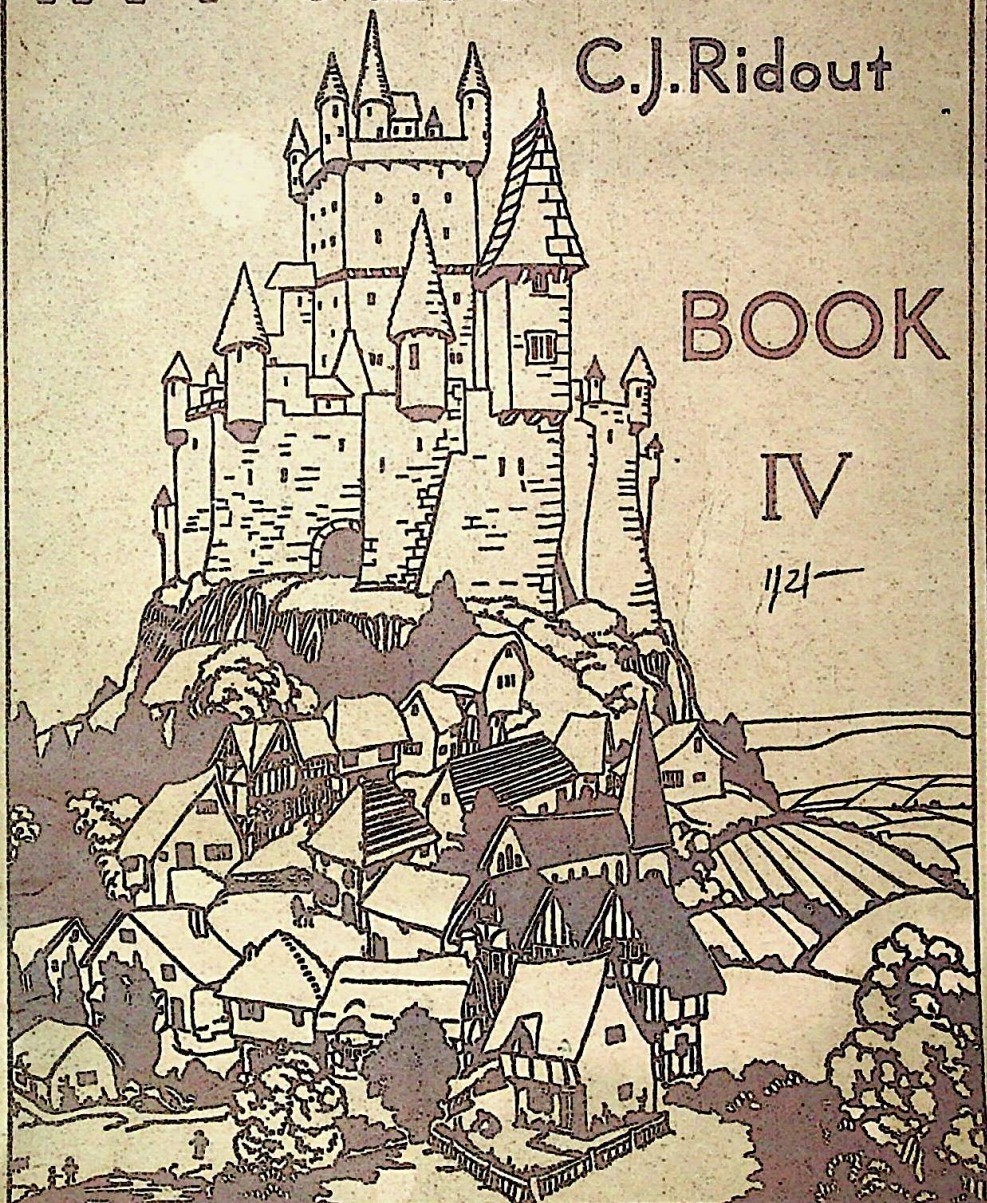
IN POEM-TOWN

C.J. Ridout

BOOK

IV

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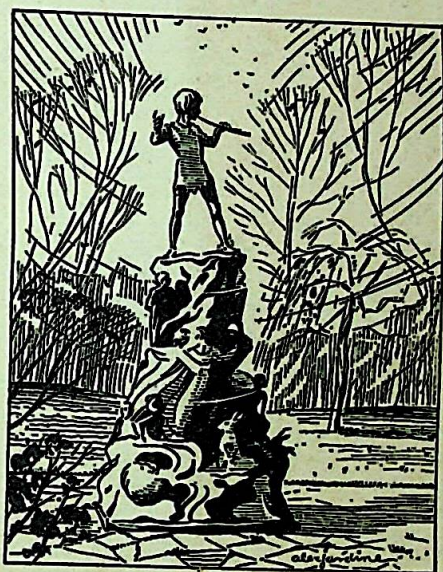
IN POEM-TOWN

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BOOK IV



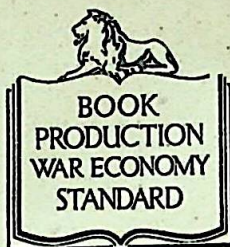
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William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a Cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host of golden Daffodils;
Beside the Lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

The waves beside them danced, but they
Out-did the sparkling waves in glee:—
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed—and gazed—but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude,
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the Daffodils.

The Thistle

Laurence Binyon

In a patch of baked earth
At the crumbled cliff's brink,
Where the parching of August
Has cracked a long chink,

Against the blue void
Of still sea and sky
Stands single a thistle,
Tall, tarnished, and dry.

Frayed leaves, spotted brown,
Head hoary and torn,
Was ever a weed
Upon earth so forlorn,

So solemnly gazed on
By the sun in his sheen
That prints in long shadow
Its raggedness lean?

From the sky comes no laughter,
From earth not a moan.
Erect stands the thistle,
Its seeds abroad blown.

No Thoroughfare.

Ruth Holmes

In a dear little home of tarpaulin and boards,
Where the wood-blocks are " up " in our street,
Lives a little old man dressed in sacking and cords,
Crouching snug on a low wooden seat.

There's a brazier of charcoal that flickers and glows
Where the wigwam's front door ought to be;
As the little old man toasts his fingers and nose
How I wish he had room there for me!

I could hang out the lanterns on trestles and poles .
Like big rubies all shining and red,
And to guard a wide street full of wood-blocks and
holes
Is far nicer than going to bed.

I would stay all night long by the little old man
Keeping watch o'er each pickaxe and spade,
Frying sausages too, in a battered old pan,
For the dark would not make me afraid.

And the little old man might drop off in a doze
Till the sky turned to orange and pink,
But the street would be safe from all brigands and
foes
For I should not have slumbered a wink.

I Know a Land

H. E. Priestley

I know a land o'er the southern seas
Where the monkeys sway in the coconut trees
Hanging aloft on their long thin tails,
Where the sinuous tropical creeper trails.
Waving palm trees line the beach,
Gaily plumag'd cockatoos screech,
Chocolate nigger boys gaily play
In the blist'ring sun on a blazing day,
And *that's* where I'd like to be!

I know a land 'neath the mid-night sun
Where the polar bears dive and the seals have
fun,
Where the huskies drag the loaded sleigh
O'er the gleaming snow thro' the six-month day.
Where the Eskimo on snow-shoe trim
Roves by the ocean's ice-bound rim
He's a thick fur coat for the blinding storm,
And a little snow hut to keep him warm,
And *that's* where I'd like to be!

I know a land in a fairer clime,
Where o'er peaceful meadows the church bells
chime;
Where swallows dart above the eaves,
And thrushes warble among the leaves.
There may be lands 'neath a veil of snow,
Where icebergs glitter and bleak winds blow;
There may be lands 'neath southern star
Where natives dance to the wild guitar,
But the land that I live in is better by far
Than the lands where I'd like to be.

“ That’s not the Way at Sea ”

Frances Ridley Havergal

He stood upon the fiery deck,
Our Captain kind and brave!
He would not leave the burning wreck,
While there was one to save.
We wanted him to go before,
And we would follow fast;
We could not bear to leave him there,
Beside the blazing mast.
But his voice rang out in a cheery shout,
And noble words spoke he,—
“ That’s not the way at sea, my boys,
That’s not the way at sea!”

So each one did as he was bid,
And into the boats we passed,
While closer came the scorching flame,
And our Captain was the last.
Yet once again he dared his life,
One little lad to save;
Then we pulled to shore from the blaze
and roar,
With our Captain kind and brave.
In the face of Death, with its fiery breath,
He had stood,—and so would we!
For that’s the way at sea, my boys,
For that’s the way at sea!

Now let the noble words resound,
And echo far and free,
Wherever English hearts are found,
On English shore or sea.

The iron nerve of duty, joined
With golden vein of love,
Can dare to do, and dare to wait,
With courage from above.
Our Captain's shout among the flames
A watchword long shall be,—
"That's not the way at sea, my boys,
That's not the way at sea!"

Merchantmen

Cicely Fox-Smith

All honour to be merchantmen,
And ships of all degree,
In warlike dangers manifold
Who sail and keep the sea,—
In peril of unlitten coast
And death-besprinkled foam,
Who daily dare a hundred deaths
To bring their cargoes home.

A liner out of Liverpool—a tanker from the Clyde—
A hard-run tramp from anywhere—a tug from
Merseyside—

A cattle-boat from Birkenhead—a coaler from the
Tyne—

All honour be to merchantmen while any star shall
shine!

All honour to be merchantmen,
And ships both great and small,
The swift and strong to run their race
(And smite their foes withal),
The little ships that sink or swim,
And pay the pirates' toll,

Unarmoured save by valiant hearts,
'And strong in nought but soul.

All honour to be merchantmen
So long as tides shall run,
Who gave the seas their glorious dead
From rise to set of sun:
All honour to be merchantmen
While England's name shall stand,
Who sailed and fought, and dared and died,
And served and saved their land!

A sailing ship from Liverpool—a tanker from the
Clyde—
A schooner from the West Country—a tug from
Merseyside—
A fishing-smack from Grimsby town—a coaler
from the Tyne—
All honour be to merchantmen while sun and moon
shall shine.

A Farewell

Charles Kingsley

My fairest child, I have no song to give you;
No lark could pipe to skies so dull and grey;
Yet, ere we part, one lesson I can leave you
For every day.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever,
Do noble things, not dream them all day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast for-ever
One grand, sweet song.

Elizabeth in Kensington Gardens

L. G. Eady

The daffodils were laughing as they nodded in the
breeze,
And perky little crocuses were playing round the
trees;
The Spring was in the sunshine and the Spring was
in the sky—
“I’m sure we’ll have adventures,” to Elizabeth
said I.

We wandered down the Broad Walk where the
chestnut buds were fat;
We watched a yellow butterfly and, when we tired
of that,
We went to Peter’s statue just to see what we could
see—
“You never know in Springtime,” said Elizabeth
to me.

Perhaps you’ll not believe it, but the pedestal was
bare.
We looked again for certain, then we heard a lilting
air,
And there was Peter dancing on the sunlit grass
close by—
“I *knew* we’d have adventures!” to Elizabeth
said I.

He waved to us to join him as he piped a merry
trill;
Our feet were simply tingling and we couldn’t keep
them still,

So we danced to Peter's music all as happy as could be—

"He only plays in Springtime," said Elizabeth to me.

And when we'd finished dancing it was time to say good-bye;

"That *was* a fine adventure!" to Elizabeth said I;

"For Peter Pan to dance like that when we were there to see!"

"That's nothing—not in Springtime," said Elizabeth to me.

Rain in Summer

H. W. Longfellow

How beautiful is the rain!
After the dust and heat,
In the broad and fiery street,
In the narrow lane,
How beautiful is the rain!

How it clatters along the roofs,
Like the tramp of hoofs!
How it gushes and struggles out
From the throat of the overflowing spout!

Across the window pane
It pours and pours;
And swift and wide,
With a muddy tide,
Like a river down the gutter roars
The rain, the welcome rain! . . .

The Brook

Lord Tennyson

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
I make a sudden sally,
And sparkle out among the fern,
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
Or slip between the ridges,
By twenty thorps, a little town,
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways
In little sharps and trebles,
I bubble into eddying bays,
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret,
By many a field and fallow,
And many a fairy foreland set
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter as I flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

[14]

I wind about, and in and out,
With here a blossom sailing,
And here and there a lusty trout.
And here and there a grayling.

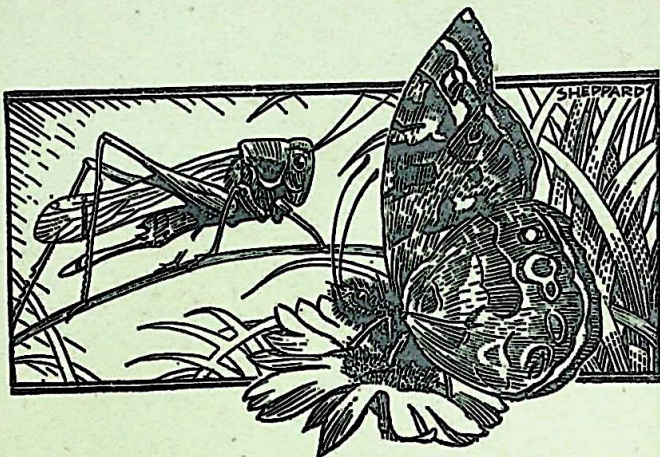
I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeams dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
In brambly wildernesses;
I linger by my shingly bars;
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow
To join the brimming river,
For men may come and men may go,
But I go on for ever.

hern—heron; *bicker*—move quickly; *thorps*—villages;
fairy foreland—tiny promontory.



The Butterfly's Ball

William Roscoe

Come, little folks, hasten,
I beg of you all,
To the Grasshopper's Feast, and the Butterfly's
Ball.

The trumpeter Gadfly has summon'd the crew,
And the revels are now only waiting for you.

And there came the Beetle, so blind and so black,
Who carried the Emmet, his friend, on his back;
And there came the Gnat, and the Dragonfly too,
With all their relations, green, orange, and blue.
And there came the Moth in his plumage of down,
And the Hornet in jacket of yellow and brown,
Who with him the Wasp, his companion did bring,
But they promised that evening to lay by their sting.

A mushroom their table, and on it was spread
A water-dock leaf, which the tablecloth made;
The dishes were diff'rent to each of their taste,
And the Bee brought the honey to sweeten the
feast.

Then, as evening gave way to the shadows of night,
Their watchman, the Glow-worm, came out with
his light;

So home let us hasten, while yet we can see,
For no watchman is waiting for you and for me.

The Watercress Seller

Lady Lindsay

Who'll buy my watercress?—fresh and cool,
Gathered at dawn in a crystal pool,
Near the river a-glimmer
With quiver and shimmer—
Come buy my watercress, fresh and cool!

There—where the moor-hen builds her nest,
There—where the nixie creeps to rest,
Where the kingfisher darts like a flash for his prey,
And the heron skims low on his stately way,
Where green flags rock on a lake of gold,
And fields of forget-me-not buds unfold—
Near the river a-glimmer
With quiver and shimmer,
'Twas gathered at dawn in a crystal pool.

Watercress, watercress, fresh and cool!
Who'll buy my watercress, fresh and cool!

The Saturdays' Party in Fairyland

M. C. Davies

All the Saturdays met one day
(Each was very polite, they say),
They shook each other by the hand,
And had a party in Fairyland!

They wouldn't let any Monday in,
And not one Tuesday at all could win
Her way past the supercilious crowd!
And Wednesdays—why, they weren't allowed!

Thursdays could only stand in the street
And look through the door at the things to eat!
And the Fridays and Sundays pretended they
Didn't like parties anyway!

But the Saturdays had the greatest fun!
They played "Hop-scotch" and "Run-sheep-
run,"
And "Frog-in-the-Meadow" and "Pull-away!"
And everything else they wanted to play!

They used the Throne for "Musical Chairs",
As if the Fairy Queen's house were theirs!
In rooms enchanted they ran and hid,
And whatever they wished they could do, they did!

And after they'd played and played and played,
They had pink straws in their lemonade!
And the cookies and tarts were like a dream!
And all the Saturdays had ice-cream!

I'd my doubts when I heard—And you have yours—
But strange things happen on Foreign Shores!
And they say that the best fête ever planned
Was the Saturdays' party in Fairyland!

No!

Thomas Hood

No sun—no moon!
No morn—no noon—
No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day—
No sky—no earthly view—
No distance looking blue—
No road—no street—no “t’other side the way”—
No end to any Row
No indications where the Crescents go—
No top to any steeple—
No recognitions of familiar people—
No courtesies for showing ‘em—
No knowing ‘em!—
No travelling at all—no locomotion,
No inkling of the way—no notion—
“No go”—by land or ocean—
No mail—no post—
No news from any foreign coast—
No Park—no Ring—no afternoon gentility—
No company—no nobility,—
No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease,
No comfortable feel in any member—
No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,
No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—
November!

A Summer Day

Michael Drayton

Clear had the day been from the dawn,
All chequered was the sky,
Thin clouds like scarfs of cobweb lawn
Veiled heaven's most glorious eye.

The wind had no more strength than this,
That leisurely it blew,
To make one leaf the next to kiss
That closely by it grew.

The rills that on the pebbles played
Might now be heard at will;
This world the only music made,
Else everything was still.

A Winter Song

Robert Burns

Up in the morning's no' for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are covered wi' snaw
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shrill I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn,
A' day they fare but sparely;
And lang's the night frae e'en to morn;
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

sairly—sorely, severely.

A Summer Day

Florence Harrison

Not by the city bells that chime the hours
 I'll tell this day,
But by the bloom and fall of things in flowers
 And the slow way
Of cloud shadows, and swathing sunshine wrapping
 The gorse-gilt plain;
And little lifted leaves, and water lapping,
 And maybe rain.

A shaken bough, a circle on the water,
 A rose a-blush,
A yellow iris crowned like a king's daughter,
 A piping thrush.
Swift fiery dragon-flies, and brown bees humming,
 And tiny things
Making strange music, and the twilight coming
 On measureless wings.

April Charms

W. H. Davies

When April scatters coins of primrose gold
Among the copper leaves in thickets old,
And singing skylarks from the meadows rise,
To twinkle like black stars in sunny skies;

When I can hear the small woodpecker ring
Time on a tree for all the birds that sing;
And hear the pleasant cuckoo; loud and long—
The simple bird that thinks two notes a song;

When I can hear the woodland brook, that could
Not drown a babe, with all its threatening mood;
Upon whose banks the violets make their home,
And let a few small strawberry blossoms come;

When I go forth on such a pleasant day,
One breath outdoors takes all my care away;
It goes like heavy smoke, when flames take hold
Of wood that's green, and fill a grate with gold.

Summer Shower

W. K. H.

A cloud sails up across the ardent sky
Drawing a dim grey veil of rain beneath.
The sunlight dims, the silver river smooth
Begins to dimple here and there, and soon
Faster and faster dance the hurrying drops.
From the wide shelter of this noble beech
As from an open tent, we see around
Slow-drifting rainy curtains. Overhead
Rain murmurs loud and louder on the leaves,
A rising roar; and now some heavy drops
Plunge through our green majestic canopy
And fall through all the storeys of the tree
To reach us here. Then suddenly, above,
The cataract slackens and the noise is stilled;
In breaking sunshine stirs a little breeze
That sends a thousand jewels pattering.
The shower has passed, and in the brightening sky
The rainbow's airy splendours fade and die.

Writing

Hugh Chesterman

Once, long ago, so I've been told,
When the world was only a few years old,
They didn't have any A B C
Like the one that was planned for you and me.
There weren't any pens to nibble and bite,
And nobody knew the way to write.
Nobody learned their capital G's,
Nobody learned to cross their t's,
And whether you dotted an i or not
Didn't really matter a jot,
Because there wasn't an i to dot.
Nobody's nib got bent or crossed,
Nobody's Copying Book got lost,
Ink-pots didn't get spilt and cracked,
And thumbs and fingers never got blacked.
They wrote things down in a prettier way,
For whatever it was they had to say
They said it in pictures crudely drawn—
A cat, or a crow, or a unicorn—
Scratched on stone with a rusty nail,
And every picture told a tale;
What should we think of ourselves to-day
If you and I were to write this way?
Just think of papa's surprise and sorrow
If he got a letter like this to-morrow.

The West Wind

John Masefield

It's a warm wind, the west wind, full of birds' cries;
I never hear the west wind but tears are in my eyes,
For it comes from the west lands, the old brown
hills,
And April's in the west wind, and daffodils.

It's a fine land, the west land, for hearts as tired as
mine,
Apple orchards blossom there, and the air's like
wine.
There is cool green grass there, where men may lie
at rest,
And the thrushes are in song there, fluting from the
nest.

"Will ye not come home, brother? Ye have been
long away,
It's April, and blossom time, and white is the may:
And bright is the sun, brother, and warm is the
rain,
Will ye not come home, brother, home to us again?"

"The young corn is green, brother, where the
rabbits run;
It's blue sky, and white clouds, and warm rain and
sun.
It's song to a man's soul, brother, fire to a man's
brain,
To hear the wild bees and see the merry spring
again."

" Larks are singing in the west, brother, above the
green wheat,
So will ye not come home, brother, and rest your
tired feet?
I've a balm for bruised hearts, brother, sleep for
aching eyes,"
Says the warm wind, the west wind, full of birds'
cries.

It's the white road westwards is the road I must
tread
To the green grass, the cool grass, and rest for heart
and head,
To the violets and the warm hearts and the thrushes'
song,
In the fine land, the west land, the land where I
belong.

The Arrow and the Song

H. W. Longfellow

I shot an arrow into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For, so swiftly it flew, the sight
Could not follow it in its flight.

I breathed a song into the air,
It fell to earth, I knew not where;
For who has sight so keen and strong,
That it can follow the flight of song?

Long, long afterward, in an oak
I found the arrow, still unbroke;
And the song, from beginning to end,
I found again in the heart of a friend.

The Chintz-Birds

V. Fane

On sunny summer mornings, when happy thrushes
call,
I lie and watch the chintz-birds, who live upon the
wall,
Birds of curious plumage and very wistful eyes,
Eagerly pursuing elusive butterflies.

Splendid are the chintz-birds, with green and golden
wings;
Their crimson tails outshine by far the finest bird
that sings;
And wistfully they hover, and anxiously they try
But never, never, never have they caught a butter-
fly!

I fancy, if they caught one, the chintz-birds might
be free
To leave the wall and fly away to bush and branch
and tree;
But the complacent butterflies, who flutter in a
crowd,
Know capture is impossible and could not be
allowed.

Splendid are the butterflies, and confident and calm;
However near the eager beaks, they scorn to feel a
qualm;
I'm sorry for the chintz-birds, whose task is never
done—
Always chasing butterflies and never catching one.

The Ploughman

E. V. Lucas

On winter mornings, when the air is still,
The ploughman's cries come floating down the hill,

Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!

The selfsame sharp and throaty cries are they
That teamsters used in Julius Cæsar's day—

Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!

Nothing is changed. Since tillage first began
The same brown earth has yielded food to man.

Nothing is changed—save ploughman, team and
share:

Ten thousand furrows have been made just there;

And every time, with cautious, sidelong looks,
Have followed, close behind, the greedy rooks.

And every time the team was kept in hand
By those two potent phrases of command—

Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!

Which every horse on earth can understand
From Christiana to Van Dieman's land,

Ge-e-e-e Up! Ge-e-e-e Whoa!

The Song-Sparrow

Henry van Dyke

He does not wear a Joseph's-coat
Of many colours, smart and gay;
His suit is Quaker brown and gray,
With darker patches at his throat.
And yet of all the well-dressed throng
Not one can sing so brave a song.
It makes the pride of looks appear
A vain and foolish thing, to hear
His "Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer."

A lofty place he does not love,
But sits by choice, and well at ease,
In hedges and in little trees
That stretch their slender arms above
The meadow-brook; and there he sings
Till all the field with pleasure rings;
And so he tells in every ear,
That lowly homes to heaven are near
In "Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry cheer."

I like the tune, I like the words;
They seem so true, so free from art,
So friendly, and so full of heart,
That if but one of all the birds
Could be my comrade everywhere,
My little brother of the air
I'd choose the song-sparrow, my dear,
Because he'd bless me, every year,
With "Sweet—sweet—sweet—very merry
cheer."



My Heart's in the Highlands

Robert Burns

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birthplace of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains, high cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild-hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
Chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands, wherever I go.

Northern Seas

William Howitt

Up! · Up! let us a voyage take,
Why sit we here at ease?
Find us a vessel tight and snug,
Bound for the Northern Seas.

I long to see the Northern Lights
With their rushing splendours fly,
Like living things, with flaming wings,
Wide o'er the wondrous sky.

I long to see those icebergs vast,
With heads all crowned with snow,
Whose green roots sleep in the awful deep,
Two hundred fathoms low.

I long to hear the thundering crash
Of their terrific fall;
And the echoes from a thousand cliffs
Like lonely voices call.

There shall we see the fierce white bear;
The sleepy seals aground;
And the spouting whales, that to and fro
Sail with a dreary sound.

There may we tread on depths of ice,
That the hairy mammoth hide;
Perfect as when in times of old,
The mighty creature died.

And whilst the setting sun shines on
Through the still heaven's deep blue,

We'll traversè the azure waves, the herds
Of the dread sea-horse to view.

We'll pass the shores of solemn pine,
Where wolves and black bears prow!;
And away to the Northern isles of mist,
To rouse the Northern fowl.

The Ships

J. J. Bell

For many a year I've watched the ships a-sailing to
and fro,
The mighty ships, the little ships, the speedy and
the slow;
And many a time I've told myself that some day I
would go
Around the world that is so full of wonders.

The swift and stately liners, how they run without a
rest!
The great three-masters, they have touched the East
and told the West!
The monster burden-bearers—oh, they all have
plunged and pressed
Around the world that is so full of wonders!

The cruiser and the battleship that loom as dark as
doubt,
The devilish destroyer and the hateful, hideous
scout—
These deathly things may also rush, with roar and
snarl and shout,
Around the world that is so full of wonders!

My lord he owns a grand white yacht, most beautiful
and fine,
But seldom does she leave the firth, lest he should
fail to dine.
I'd find a thousand richer feasts than his—if she
were mine—
Around the world that is so full of wonders.

The shabby tramp that like a wedge is hammered
through the seas,
The little brown-sailed brigantine that traps the
lightest breeze—
Oh, I'd be well content to fare aboard the least of
these
Around the world that is so full of wonders.

The things I've heard, the things I've read, the
things I've dreamed might be,
The boyish tales, the old men's yarns—they will not
pass from me.
I've heard, I've read, I've dreamed. . . . But all the
time I've longed to *see*—
Around the world that is so full of wonders.

So year by year I watch the ships a-sailing to and
fro,
The ships that come as strangers and the ships I've
learned to know.
. . . Folk smile to hear an old man say that *some* day
he will go
Around the world that is so full of wonders.

Uncle John's Pig

ffrida Wolfe

When Uncle John brought home the pig on Christmas afternoon,

It didn't look like anything except a burst balloon,
A wiggly waggly pinky rag, as limp as limp could be;

"Call that a pig?" said little Jane: said Uncle,
"Wait and see."

He blew into the pig and soon we saw it filling out;
He blew again and then we saw four legs, a little snout;

He blew once more, and then we saw the curly tail so neat,

He screwed it up and there it stood, the Perfect Pig complete.

A pig to join in any game, so steady and so stout;
Then sometimes Uncle John, for fun, would let the air run out,

And then we'd see it shrivel up and sink down dead—and then

Kind Uncle John would laugh and blow it back to life again.

But after Uncle John had gone (he went on Boxing Night),

Said Jane, "Let's make it bigger now," and soon she'd blown it tight;

She puffed and blew, and still it grew so big, so BIG, so BIG,

That with a mighty BANG . . . it burst . . .

O, how I missed that pig!

The Frost

Hannah F. Gould

The Frost looked forth one still, clear night
And whispered, " Now I shall be out of sight;
So through the valley and over the height

In silence I'll take my way.

I will not go on like that blustering train—
The wind and the snow, the hail and the rain—
Who make so much bustle and noise in vain;
But I'll be as busy as they."

Then he flew to the mountain and powdered
its crest,

He lit on the trees and their boughs he dressed
With diamond beads; and over the breast

Of the quivering lake he spread
A coat of mail, that it need not fear
The downward point of many a spear
That he hung on its margin, far and near,
Where a rock could rear its head.

He went to the windows of those who slept,
And over each pane like a fairy, crept;
Wherever he breathed, wherever he stept,
By the light of the moon were seen
Most beautiful things; there were flowers and
trees,

There were bevvies of birds and swarms of bees;
There were cities and temples and towers;
and these

All pictured in silver sheen.

But he did one thing that was hardly fair;
He went to the cupboard, and finding there
That all had forgotten for him to prepare—
“Now just to set them a-thinking,
I’ll bite this basket of fruit,” said he.
“This costly pitcher I’ll burst in three;
And the glass of water they’ve left for me
Shall *tchick!* to tell them I’m drinking.”

Fairy Music

Rose Fyleman

When the fiddlers play their tunes, you may some-
times hear,
Very softly chiming in, magically clear,
Magically high, and sweet, the tiny crystal notes
Of fairy voices bubbling free from tiny fairy throats.

When the birds at break of day chant their morning
prayers,
Or on sunny afternoons pipe ecstatic airs,
Comes an added rush of sound to the silver din—
Songs of fairy troubadours gladly joining in.

When athwart the drowsy fields summer twilight
falls,
Through the tranquil air there float elfin madrigals,
And in wild November nights, on the winds astride,
Fairy hosts go rushing by, singing as they ride.

Every dream that mortals dream, sleeping or awake,
Every lovely fragile hope—these the fairies take,
Delicately fashion them and give them back again
In tender, limpid melodies that charm the hearts of
men.

The Frost Spirit

J. G. Whittier

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes!

You may trace his footsteps now

On the naked woods and the blasted fields and the
brown hill's withered brow.

He has smitten the leaves of the grey old trees where
their pleasant green came forth,

And the winds, which follow wherever he goes,
have shaken them down to earth.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes!
from the frozen Labrador,—

From the icy bridge of the Northern seas, which
the white bear wanders o'er,—

Where the fisherman's sail is stiff with ice, and the
luckless forms below

In the sunless cold of the lingering night into
marble statues grow!

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes!
on the rushing Northern blast,

And the dark Norwegian pines have bowed as his
fearful breath went past.

With an unscorched wing he has hurried on, where
the fires of Hecla glow

On the darkly beautiful sky above and the ancient
ice below.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes!—
and the quiet lake shall feel

The torpid touch of his glazing breath, and ring to
the skater's heel;

And the streams which danced on the broken rocks,
or sang to the leaning grass,
Shall bow again to their winter chain, and in mourn-
ful silence pass.

He comes,—he comes,—the Frost Spirit comes!—
let us meet him as we may,
And turn with the light of the parlour-fire his evil
power away;
And gather closer the circle round, when that
firelight dances high,
And laugh at the shriek of the baffled Fiend as his
sounding wing goes by!

Weathers

Thomas Hardy

This is the weather the cuckoo likes,
And so do I;
When showers betumble the chestnut spikes,
And nestlings fly;
And the little brown nightingale bills his best,
And they sit outside at "The Travellers' Rest",
And maids come forth sprig-muslin drest,
And citizens dream of the south and west,
And so do I.

This is the weather the shepherd shuns,
And so do I;
When beeches drip in brown and duns,
And thresh, and ply;
And hill-hid tides throb, throe on throe,
And meadow rivulets overflow,
And drops on gate-bars hang in a row,
And rooks in families homeward go,
And so do I.

Extract from The Pied Piper of Hamelin

Robert Browning

The piper, who was attired in a pied suit (one of many colours), visited Hamelin where the townsfolk were troubled with rats. He said that he was able to charm away all living creatures, and, having been promised a sum of money, he commenced to rid the town of rats.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept
In his quiet pipe the while;
Then, like a musical adept,
To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered;
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the house the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser

Wherein all plunged and perished
—Save one who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary.

The task completed, the piper asked for payment, but the money
was not forthcoming so—

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth, straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was a rustling, that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling at pitching and hustling,
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chatter-
ing,
And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is
scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

With the exception of a lame boy, all the children of Hamelin
were charmed away to a fairy mountain and were "gone for ever".

Travels by the Fireside

H. W. Longfellow

The ceaseless rain is falling fast,
And yonder gilded vane,
Immovable for three days past,
Points to the misty main.

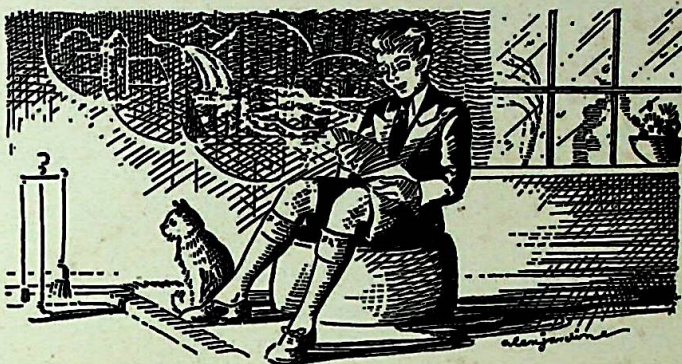
It drives me in upon myself,
And to the fireside gleams,
To pleasant books that crowd my shelf,
And still more pleasant dreams.

I read whatever bards have sung
Of lands beyond the sea,
And the bright days when I was young
Come thronging back to me.

I fancy I can hear again
The Alpine torrent's roar,
The mule-bells on the hills of Spain,
The sea at Elsinore.

I see the convent's gleaming wall
Rise from its groves of pine,
And towers of old cathedrals tall,
And castles by the Rhine.

I journey on by park and spire,
Beneath centennial trees,
Through fields with poppies all on fire,
And gleams of distant seas.



I fear no more the dust and heat,
No more I feel fatigue,
While journeying with another's feet,
O'er many a lengthening league.

Let others traverse sea and land,
And toil through various climes,
I turn the world round with my hand,
Reading these poet's rhymes.

From them I learn whatever lies
Beneath each changing zone,
And see, when looking with their eyes,
Better than with mine own.

The Secret of the Machines

Rudyard Kipling

We were taken from the ore-bed and the mine,
We were melted in the furnace and the pit—
We were cast and wrought and hammered to design,
We were cut and filed and tooled and gauged to fit.

Some water, coal, and oil is all we ask,
And a thousandth of an inch to give us play:
And now if you will set us to our task,
We will serve you four and twenty hours a day!
We can pull and haul and push and lift and drive,
We can print and plough and weave and heat and light,
We can run and jump and swim and fly and dive,
We can see and hear and count and read and write!

Would you call a friend from half across the world?
If you'll let us have his name and town and state,
You shall see and hear your crackling question hurled

Across the arch of heaven while you wait.
Has he answered? Does he need you at his side?
You can start this very evening if you choose,
And take the Western Ocean in the stride
Of seventy thousand horses and some screws!
The boat-express is waiting your command!
You will find the *Mauretania* at the quay,
Till her captain turns the lever 'neath his hand,
And the monstrous nine-decked city goes to sea.

Do you wish to make the mountains bare their head
And lay their new-cut forests at your feet?
Do you want to turn a river in its bed,
Or plant a barren wilderness with wheat?
Shall we pipe aloft and bring you water down
From the never-failing cisterns of the snows,
To work the mills and tramways in your town,
And irrigate your orchards as it flows?
It is easy! Give us dynamite and drills!
Watch the iron-shouldered rocks lie down and
quake
As the thirsty desert-level floods and fills,
And the valley we have dammed becomes a
lake.

But remember, please, the Law by which we live,
We are not built to comprehend a lie.
We can neither love nor pity nor forgive,
If you make a slip in handling us you die!
We are greater than the Peoples or the Kings—
Be humble, as you crawl beneath our rods!—
Our touch can alter all created things,
We are everything on earth—except The Gods!

*Though our smoke may hide the Heavens from your
eyes,
It will vanish and the stars will shine again,
Because, for all our power and weight and size,
We are nothing more than children of your brain!*

Little Bell

Thomas Westwood

Piped the blackbird, on the beechwood spray,
"Pretty maid, slow wandering this way,
What's your name?" quoth he.
"What's your name? Oh! Stop and straight unfold
Pretty maid, with showery curls of gold."
"Little Bell," said she.

Little Bell sat down beneath the rocks,
Tossed aside her gleaming, golden locks,
"Bonny bird," quoth she,
"Sing me your best song before I go."
"Here's the very finest song I know,
Little Bell," said he.

And the blackbird piped—you never heard
Half so gay a song from any bird;
Full of quips and wiles;
Now so round and rich, now soft and slow
All for love of that sweet face below,
Dimpled o'er with smiles.

And the while that bonny bird did pour
His full heart out freely, o'er and o'er,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below
All the sweetness seem'd to grow and grow,
And shine forth in happy overflow
From the brown bright eyes.

Down the dell she tripp'd and through the glade—
Peep'd the squirrel from the hazel shade,
And, from out the tree,
Swung and leap'd and frolick'd, void of fear,
While bold blackbird piped that all might hear—
“Little Bell,” piped he.

Little Bell sat down amid the fern:
“Squirrel, squirrel, to your task return;
Bring me nuts,” quoth she.
Up, away! the frisky squirrel hies,
Golden wood-lights glancing in his eyes,
And adown the tree,
Great ripe nuts, kiss'd brown by July sun
In the little lap drop, one by one—
Hark! how blackbird pipes to see the fun!
“Happy Bell!” pipes he.

Little Bell look'd up and down the glade:
“Squirrel, squirrel, from the nut-tree shade,
Bonny blackbird, if you're not afraid,
Come and share with me!”
Down came squirrel, eager for his fare,
Down came bonny blackbird, I declare;
Little Bell gave each his honest share—
Ah! the merry three!

And the while those frolick playmates twain
Piped and frisked from bough to bough again,
'Neath the morning skies,
In the little childish heart below
All the sweetness seem'd to grow and grow,
And shine out in happy overflow,
From her brown, bright eyes.

By her snow-white cot at close of day,
Knelt sweet Bell, with folded palms, to pray;
Very calm and clear.
Rose the praying voice to where, unseen,
In blue heaven, an angel shape serene
Paused awhile to hear.

"What good child is this," the angel said,
"That with happy heart beside her bed
Prays so lovingly?"
Low and soft, oh! very low and soft,
Croon'd the blackbird in the orchard croft.
"Bell, *dear* Bell!" croon'd he.

"Whom God's creatures love," the angel fair
Murmur'd, "God doth bless with angel's care;
Child, thy bed shall be
Folded safe from harm; love deep and kind
Shall watch around, and leave good gifts behind,
Little Bell, for thee."

The Snail, the Hare, and the Tortoise

Frank Hart

A snail once to a tortoise said:
"What is your speed per hour?"
The tortoise answered: "Oh, not much,
I'm but *ONE TORTOISE POWER.*"

" But didn't you," the snail remarked,
 " Once beat the nimble hare?"
" Not I!" this modest tortoise said,
 " Great Grand-papa was there!

" You see, the hare went off to sleep
 When Grand-papa was gone;
And while the hare slept, our old man
 Just kept on keeping on."

" I see," the snail at length replied,
 " I always thought it queer.
D'you think if I tried such a race,
 I need have any fear?"

The tortoise smiled and shook his head;
 " The times are vastly changed,
(Great Grand-pa had a lot of luck),
 Things are now so arranged

" That crowds of sporting folks would come
 And keep the hare awake;
So what a toil 'twould be for you,
 What strides you'd have to take!

" Besides, why should we nowadays
 Be proud to beat a hare?
We're more distinguished as we are—
 Slow motion's now so rare!"

The Snail

William Cowper

To grass, or leaf, or fruit, or wall,
The snail sticks close, nor fears to fall,
As if he grew there, house and all
Together.

Within that house secure he hides,
When danger imminent betides,
Of storm, or other harm besides
Of weather.

Give but his horns the slightest touch,
His self-collecting power is such,
He shrinks into his house with much
Displeasure.

Where'er he dwells, he dwells alone,
Except himself, has chattels none,
Well satisfied to be his own
Whole treasure.

Thus, hermit-like, his life he leads,
Nor partner of his banquet needs,
And if he meets one, only feeds
The faster.

Who seeks him must be worse than blind
(He and his house are so combined),
If, finding it, he fails to find
Its master.

Crusty Bread

E. V. Lucas

The country is the place for milk,
All creamy, with a head;
And butter fresh as fresh can be,
And bread to spread it on at tea—
The finest bread you'll ever see,
The really crusty bread.

What, don't you know the country crust?
Come, come, you must!
Not know the country, crunchy crust—
How crisp it is and sweet it is,
Magnificent to eat it is,
Impossible to beat it is?
Why sure you must!
You must!

Sheep

Dorothy Wellesley

How unconcerned the grazing sheep
Behaving in such manner;
They stand upon their breakfast, they
Lie down upon their dinner.

This would not seem so strange to us
If fish grew round our legs,
If we had floors of marmalade
And beds of buttered eggs.

The Night Express

Cosmo Monkhouse

With three snorts of strength,
Stretching my mighty length,
Like some long dragon stirring in his sleep,
Out from the glare of gas
Into the night I pass,
And plunge along into silence deep.

{ Little I know or care
What is the load I bear,
Why thus compelled, I seek not to divine;
At man's command I stir,
I, his stern messenger!
Does he his duty well as I do mine?

Straight on my silent road,
Flanked by no man's abode,
No foe I parley with, no friend I greet;
Or like a bolt I fly
Under the starry sky,
Scorning the current of the sluggish street.

Onward from South to North,
Onward from Thames to Forth,
On—like a comet—on, unceasingly,
Faster and faster yet.
On—where far boughs of jet
Stretch their wild woof against the pearly sky.

Faster and faster still—
Dive I through rock and hill,
Starting the echoes with my shrill alarms;
Swiftly I curve and bend,
While, like an eager friend,
The distance runs to clasp me in its arms.

On through the night I steer;
Never a sound I hear
Save the strong beating of my steady stroke,
Save when the circling owl
Hoots, or the screaming fowl
Rise from the marshes like a sudden smoke.

On—till the race be won,
On—till the coming sun
Blinds moon and stars with his excessive light;
On till the earth be green
And the first lark be seen
Shaking away with songs the dews of night.

Sudden my speed I slack—
Sudden all force I lack,
Without a struggle yield I up my breath;
Numbed are my thews of steel,
Wearily rolls each wheel,
My heart cools slowly to the sleep of death.

The Blind Men and the Elephant

J. G. Saxe

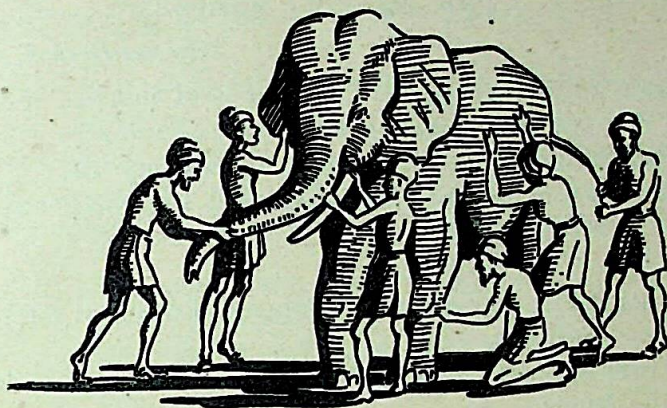
It was six men of Hindostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the elephant,
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.

The *first* approached the elephant,
And happening to fall
Against its broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl,
“God bless me! but the elephant
Is very like a wall!”

The *second*, feeling of the tusk,
Cried, “Ho! what have we here
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an elephant
Is very like a spear!”

The *third* approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up and spake;
“I see,” quoth he, “the elephant
Is very like a snake!”

The *fourth* reached out his eager hand
And felt about the knee;
“What most this mighty beast is like
Is mighty plain,” quoth he;



" 'Tis clear enough the elephant
Is very like a tree!"

The *fifth* who chanced to touch the ear
Said, " E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an elephant
Is very like a fan!"

The *sixth* no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope,
" I see," quoth he, " the elephant
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Hindostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though *each* was *partly* in the right,
They *all* were in the wrong.

[53]

The Pencil's Story

Florence Hoatson

I am a little pencil, and my name is H and B,
I lie upon the mantelpiece for every one to see;
I'm handled forty times a day, it is a weary life,
And when my wits are rather dull I'm sharpened
with a knife!

I scrawl when Tommy has me, and I draw all sorts
of things,
From submarines and aeroplanes to cabbages and
kings;
I write a lovely letter when Miss Phyllis is about,
And if by chance I make mistakes Miss Phyllis
rubs them out.

And if I slip and tumble down I'm certain to be
missed,
For Mother wants me badly when she does the
washing-list,
And Father makes me keep the score when he
begins to play—
I'm just a little pencil, but I have a busy day.

I really never am allowed to grow up as I ought,
I'm getting shorter every day (it's awful to be
short),
And when the knife begins on me I ache in every
joint,
I put it in that way because you're sure to see the
point.

I'm very glad I'm useful, though my speech is
always dark,
But every time they handle me I always make my
mark!
But sorrow seems to follow me in spite of many a
friend,
For when I'm meditating I am bitten at the end.
I am a little pencil, and my name is H and B,
I lie upon the mantelpiece for every one to see;
I'm getting shorter every day, and every day I'm
older,
And when my last few hours have come they'll *put*
me in a holder!

In Bed

Florence Lacey

I am so tired of bed. All day I lie
And watch the scudding clouds across the sky.
I hear the wind the trembling leaves deride,
As in its haste it flings the boughs aside.
The thick smoke from some neighbouring chimney
tossed,
Eddies and swirls a moment, then is lost.
In sudden squall the slanting rain beats fast,
Falls like a silver curtain, and is past.
Sometimes the pigeons wheel in circling flight,
Startle the air, then vanish out of sight.
Sometimes the sparrows chatter in dispute,
Then they too fly afar, shrill voices mute.
So, all things move beyond my strip of sky
While still imprisoned in my bed I lie.

The Little Man Cricketer

O, Cricket's a game for a real live man,
Keep fit, little man, keep fit!
So get out in the open whenever you can,
Keep fit, little man, keep fit!
Don't stay in the house to play with the cat,
But put on your flannels and take your bat,
If you don't you will only grow flabby and fat,
Keep fit, little man, keep fit!

Now when to bat your stand you take,
Stand firm, little man, stand firm!
To shuffle away is a great mistake,
Stand firm, little man, stand firm!
Just watch what the bowler is trying to do,
Don't slog at a straight one or he'll get through,
And don't try to score for an over or two,
Stand firm, little man, stand firm!

And if to bowl you are given the ball,
Pitch them up, little man, pitch them up!
About two yards from the crease let them fall,
Pitch them up, little man, pitch them up!
Don't dash to the wicket with might and main,
And try to deliver an express train,
Or you'll never be asked to bowl again,
Pitch them up, little man, pitch them up!

Slack fielding loses many a match,
On your toes, little man, on your toes!
Who knows the cost of one dropped catch?
On your toes, little man, on your toes!

Don't stand stock still or you might take root,
But stand on the tip of each well-spiked boot,
If you let them go by you the crowd will hoot,
On your toes, little man, on your toes!

And when the umpire gives you out,
Don't grouse, little man, don't grouse!
It's only babies that sulk and pout,
Don't grouse, little man, don't grouse!
Of course, the ball broke that hit your pad,
Of course, all umpires are quite, quite mad,
Of course, it's really too, too bad,
But don't grouse, little man, don't grouse!

And whether the game you lose or win,
Just smile, little man, just smile!
Whether you're given out or in,
Just smile, little man, just smile!
With grousing a sportsman can have no truck,
Though once in a way you are out of luck,
And are bowled first ball, middle peg, for a duck,
Just smile, little man, just smile!

Roses

George Eliot

You love the roses—so do I. I wish
The sky would rain down roses, as they rain
From off the shaken bush. Why will it not?
Then all the valley would be pink and white
And soft to tread on. They would fall as light
As feathers, smelling sweet; -and it would be
Like sleeping and yet waking, all at once.

[57]

When Polly Buys a Hat

E. Hill

When Father goes to town with me to buy my
Sunday hat,
We can't afford to waste much time in doing things
like that;
We walk into the nearest shop, and Father tells
them then,
"Just bring a hat you think will fit a little girl of ten!"
It may be plain, it may be fine with lace and flowers
too;
If it just "feels right" upon my head we think
that it will do;
It may be red or brown or blue, with ribbons light
or dark;
We put it on—and take the car that goes to Central
Park.

When Mother buys my hat for me, we choose the
shape with care;
We ask if it's the best they have, and if they're
sure 'twill wear;
And when the trimming's rather fine, why, Mother
shakes her head
And says, "Please take the feathers off—we'd like
a bow instead!"

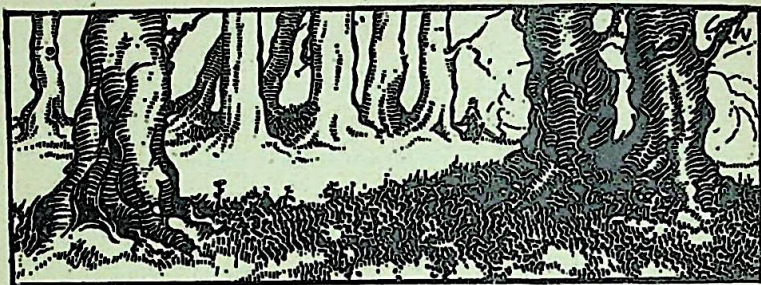
But oh, when Sister buys my hats, you really do not
know
The hurry and the worry that we have to undergo!
How many times I've heard her say,—and shivered
where I sat,—
"I think I'll go to town to-day and buy that child
a hat!"

They bring great hats with curving brims, but I'm
too tall for those;
And hats that have no brims at all, which do not
suit my nose;
I walk about, and turn around, and struggle not to
frown;
And wish I had long curly hair like Angelina
Brown.

Till when at last the daylight goes, and I'm so tired
then,
I hope I'll never, never need another hat again,
And when I've quite made up my mind that shop-
ping is the worst
Of all my tasks—then Sister buys the hat that we
saw first!

And so we take it home with us as quickly as we
may,
And Sister lifts it from the box and wonders what
they'll say;
And I—I peep into the glass, and (promise not to
tell!)
I smile, because I really think it suits me very well.

Then slip into the library as quiet as can be,
And this is what my Brother says when first he
looks at me:
“Upon—my—word! I never saw a queerer sight
than that!
Don't tell me this outrageous thing is Polly's
Sunday hat!”



Of Trees

Pamela Tennant

Winter Willow is ruddy red
Pollared in the withy-bed,
Summer Willow is green and grey,
Bending white on a windy day.

Autumn Beech is a stately creature,
Well she made her pact with Nature;
While she casts her russet gown,
She wears her new buds, sharp and brown.

If Birch beside the Broom be found,
Her satin is the more renown'd,
And yet of seasonable trees,
There is a better one than these.

For Chestnut goes to meet the Spring
While Oak and Ash are lingering.
He holds his boughs, when Winter's by,
Like altar candles to the sky.

He makes it his to be the first,
The East may blow, his bonds must burst,
And leader of the budding rout,
In one green stride the Chestnut's out.

The Rose on the Mountain

W. K. Holmes

I found a rose upon a mountain's brow,
Crimson and glowing, fragrant, fresh, and fair,
And paused in wonderment to gaze, for how
Should a red rose lie there?

That was no place for flowers—that grim grey crest
Let only lichens live; austere and proud
It checked the wind's strong fury from the west,
And wreathed its rocks in cloud.

And on the morrow, if the wind should still,
From the blue depths the sun reveal his power,
How pitiful, upon that sky-crowned hill,
Would seem a fading flower!

When night should come, and in the heavens cold
The pale moon pass upon her pathway high,
With what chill pity would that wanderer old
Look down and watch it die!

Should thus the beauty of a rose be lost?
I stooped to take it up, and yet refrained;
A curious thought my careless fancy crossed
And my intent restrained.

Perhaps some climber, in a charmed hour,
Divined the Oread those rocks among
And left the valley's tribute of a flower—
As I would leave a song:

Oread—a mountain nymph.

Heroes

E. V. Lucas

Suppose the chance were given to me
A man on a railway line to be—
To make up my mind would be fearfully hard
'Twixt Station-master, and Engine-driver,
Signalman, Stoker and Guard.

The Station-master's exceedingly grand:
He settles a thing with a wave of his hand,
His coat is trimmed with the finest gold,
And his porters do whatever they're told.
A Station-master I'd like to be,
With no one to ever say no to me.

The Driver's a man of the worthiest type,
Who leans on the engine and smokes his pipe;
Or sends her along, if he feels inclined,
Twice as fast as the fastest wind;
Who sits by the fire, if it rains or freezes,
And blows the whistle whenever he pleases.
An Engine-driver I'd like to be,
At a mile a minute to far Dundee.

The Signalman leans from his box on high
And waves his hand as expresses go by;
One pull at his handle will stop a train,
Another will send it along again.
He's pulling those handles from morning to night,
And it's all his doing that trains go right.
A Signalman bold I'd like to be,
And wave my hand to the 7.3.

The Stoker stands by the engine fire
And feeds the flames to their full desire.
At night he opens the furnace door,
And the train tears by with a glare and a roar.
He oils the engine from time to time,
And covers himself with grease and grime,
Then cleans his hands in an absent way
On a piece of rag as dirty as they.

An Engine-stoker I'd like to be,
Except for the bother of washing for tea.

The Guard has a watch that is always right,
And a bull's-eye lantern to use at night,
A flag to wave, and a whistle to blow,
And he jumps on the train when it's started to go.
A Guard has a beautiful van to himself,
With dogs on the floor, and cold tea on the shelf;
He's strong, and he's kind, and he's also willing,
If people insist, to accept a shilling.

A Railway Guard I should love to be—
The life of a Guard is the life for me.

The Station-master is all very well,
But one might get tired of being a swell.
The Signaller's box is enormously small,
And he's never permitted to leave it at all.
The Driver and Stoker get terribly cold
And are shaken to pieces before they're half old.
But the Guard, the Guard, is happy and free,
And the life of the Guard is the life for me.

The Choice

ffrida Wolfe

I

Met a Lancer;
The Lancer said to me,
“ Master—Master—what would you like to be?”

I

Looked at the Lancer,
Terrible, tall and trim,
And told him that I'd like to be
Him, Him, Him.

I

Met the Plumber;
The Plumber said to me,
“ Mister—Mister—what would you like to be?
Look at the lot of tools I've got,
You'd like the same I guess?”

I

Looked at the lot and said,
“ Yes, Yes, Yes!”

I

Met a Sailor;
The Sailor said to me,
“ Cheero, Hero, what would you like to be?
It's hard to be a Bos'n tight,
But wouldn't you like to try?”

I

Said, for he must be right,
“ Aye, Aye, Aye!”

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I
Met an Airman;
The Airman said to me,
"Hey, Boy! Say, Boy, what do you want to be?
A Pedlar or a Pirate King,
A Follow-me-lad, or who?"

I
Bowed my head
To him and said,
"You, You, You!"

Moon Magic

Pamela Tennant

One day when Father and I had been
To sell our sheep at Berwick Green,
We reached the farm-house late at night,
A great moon rising round and bright.

Her strange beam shed on all around
Bewitched the trees, and streams, and ground,
Changing the willows beyond the stacks
To little old men with crouching backs.

To-day the sun was shining plain,
They all were pollarded willows again.
But at night—do you believe they're trees?
They're little old men with twisted knees.

The Dream-Town Train

Mary Farrah

When little feet grow weary,
And the toys are packed away,
And drowsy lids are closing
Over blue eyes, brown, and grey;
Each night from Blanket Station,
In the Realm of Counterpane,
The children take their tickets for
The dream-town train!

It starts at half-past bedtime
By the station clock, you'll find,
And late or naughty children
Are, of course, all left behind;
They hear the guard's loud whistle,
And they cry, "Please wait!" in vain,
While the good ones go without them by
The dream-town train!

For miles and miles they travel
Past enchanted woods and streams,
By Sleeping Beauty's Palace
To the magic Land of Dreams;
All night they feast and frolic
Till the sun wakes up again,
Then home they come from Dreamland in
The dream-town train!

So hasten, all good children,
If you'd see that land so fair,
Its wonders and its treasures,
And its castles in the air;

Just take the road at bedtime
To the Realm of Counterpane,
And wait at Blanket Station for
The dream-town train!

On the Hearthrug

Mary E. Coleridge

"Little tongue of red brown flame,
Whither go you?"—"Whence I came,
Sending on a courier spark
To explore the chimney dark.

"Once I was a sunbeam fair,
Darting through the awakened air.
Quickly to a green leaf gone,
On a forest tree I shone.

"Steely lightning struck the bough,
And I sank into a slough.
Many ages there I lay,
Ere I saw the All-Father, Day.

"Now I sparkle once again,
Flashing light and warmth to men,
Ere, like all things that are bright,
I rejoin the All-Mother, Night."

The Steeple

Elizabeth Fleming

Once Steeple Bumpstead had a steeple
Beloved by all the village people;
It was so fine and tall and stately
No wonder they admired it greatly.

But long ago an angry wizard
Blew Steeple Bumpstead folk a blizzard—
And suddenly the dust went dancing,
And hayricks in the field went prancing;
The wind set windmill sails a-whirling,
And pots and pans and plates a-twirling;
It struck the folk and made them scatter;
It beat the village eggs to batter;
It caught the farmer's wife so busy,
And round she went till she was dizzy;
It blew the thrifty, mean, and lazy
Till one and all were nearly crazy,
And one and all, both dull and clever,
Cried, "Lawks amussy! Well, I never!"
And poked their puzzled, anxious faces
From queer and unexpected places.
But in a wink the storm departed
Far quicker even than it started;
And everyone came out and wondered,
And stood awhile, and looked, and pondered;
Then suddenly cried all the people:
"Oh, Steeple Bumpstead, where's your steeple?"

The steeple, once so tall and splendid,
A heap of rubbish had descended;

Its weathercock, so bright of feather,
Had flown the country altogether,
And left the place no means of knowing
Whatever way the winds were blowing.
And tales were told and heads were shaken
To see a village so forsaken;
And all because an angry wizard
Blew Steeple Bumpstead folk a blizzard.

The Wind and the Moon

George Macdonald

Said the Wind to the Moon, "I will blow you out!
You stare
In the air
As if crying *Beware*,
Always looking what I'm about:
I hate to be watched; I will blow you out!"

The Wind blew hard, and out went the Moon.
So, deep
On a heap
Of clouds, to sleep
Down lay the Wind, and slumbered soon,
Muttering low, "I've done for that Moon!"

He turned in his bed: she was there again!
On high
In the sky
With her one ghost-eye
The Moon shone white and alive and plain:
Said the Wind, "I will blow you out again!"

The Wind blew hard, and the Moon grew slim.

“ With my sledge

And my wedge

I have knocked off her edge!

I will blow,” said the Wind, “ right fierce and grim,
And the creature will soon be slimmer than slim!”

He blew and he blew, and she thinned to a thread.

“ One puff

More’s enough

To blow her to snuff!

One good puff more where the last was bred,
And glimmer, glimmer, glum will go that thread!”

He blew a great blast, and the thread was gone.

In the air

Nowhere

Was a moonbeam bare;

Larger and nearer the shy stars shone:

Sure and certain the Moon was gone!

The Wind he took to his revels once more;

On down

And in town

A merry-mad clown,

He leaped and holloed with whistle and roar—

When there was that glimmering thread once more!

He flew in a rage—he danced and blew;

But in vain

Was the pain

Of his bursting brain,

For still the Moon-scrap the broader grew

The more that he swelled his big cheeks and blew.

Slowly she grew—till she filled the night,
And shone
On her throne
In the sky alone
A matchless, wonderful, silvery light,
Radiant and lovely, the queen of the night.

Said the Wind, "What a marvel of power am I!
With my breath,
In good faith,
I blew her to death!—

First blew her away right out of the sky,
Then blew her in: what a strength am I!"

But the Moon, she knew naught of the silly affair;
For, high
In the sky
With her one white eye,
Motionless miles above the air,
She never had heard the great Wind blare.

A Hint

Charles Kingsley

Do the work that's nearest
Though it's dull at whiles,
Helping, when you meet them,
Lame dogs over stiles.

Milk for the Cat

Harold Monro

When the tea is brought at five o'clock,
And all the neat curtains are drawn with care,
The little black cat with bright green eyes
Is suddenly purring there.

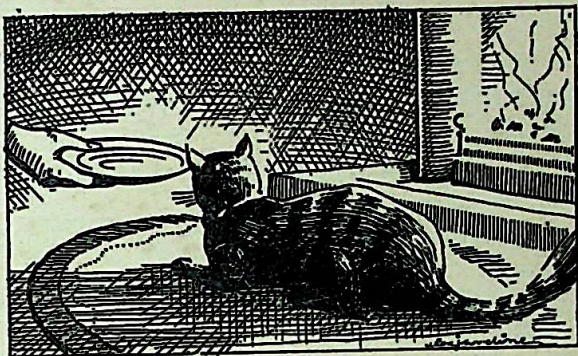
At first she pretends, having nothing to do,
She has come in merely to blink by the grate,
But, though tea may be late or the milk may be sour,
She is never late.

And presently her agate eyes
Take a soft large milky haze,
And her independent casual glance
Becomes a stiff hard gaze.

Then she stamps her claws or lifts her ears
Or twists her tail and begins to stir,
Till suddenly all her lithe body becomes
One breathing trembling purr.

The children eat and wriggle and laugh;
The two old ladies stroke their silk:
But the cat is growing small and thin with desire,
Transformed to a creeping lust for milk.

The white saucer like some full moon descends
At last from the clouds of the table above;
She sighs and dreams and thrills and glows,
Transfigured with love.



She nestles over the shining rim,
Buries her chin in the creamy sea;
Her tail hangs loose; each drowsy paw
Is doubled under each bending knee.

A long dim ecstasy holds her life;
Her world is an infinite shapeless white,
Till her tongue has curled the last holy drop.
Then she sinks back into the night,

Draws and dips her body to heap
Her sleepy nerves in the great arm-chair,
Lies defeated and buried deep
Three or four hours unconscious there.

The Armada

Lord Macaulay

Attend, all ye who list to hear our noble England's
praise;
I tell of the thrice-famous deeds she wrought in
ancient days,
When that great fleet invincible against her bore in
vain
The richest spoils of Mexico, the stoutest hearts of
Spain.

It was about the lovely close of a warm summer day,
There came a gallant merchant-ship full sail to
Plymouth Bay;
Her crew had seen Castile's black fleet, beyond
Aurigny's isle,
At earliest twilight, on the waves lie heaving many
a mile.

.
With his white hair unbonneted, the stout old
sheriff comes;
Behind him march the halberdiers, before him
sound the drums;
His yeomen round the market cross make clear an
ample space;
For there behoves him to set up the standard of
Her Grace.

.
Ho! strike the flagstaff deep, Sir Knight! Hó!
scatter flowers, fair maids!
Ho! gunners, fire a loud salute! Ho! gallants,
draw your blades!

That great fleet invincible—the Spanish Armada, 1588.

Thou sun, shine on her joyously, ye breezes, waft
her wide,
Our glorious *semper eadem*, the banner of our pride!

The freshening breeze of eve unfurled that banner's
massy fold;
The parting gleam of sunshine kissed that haughty
scroll of gold;
Night sank upon the dusky beach, and on the
purple sea,
Such night in England ne'er had been, nor e'er
again shall be.

From Eddystone to Berwick Bounds, from Lynn
to Milford Bay,
That time of slumber was as bright and busy as the
day;
For swift to east and swift to west the ghastly war-
flame spread,
High on St. Michael's Mount it shone; it shone
on Beachy Head.

Far on the deep the Spaniard saw, along each
southern shire,
Cape beyond cape, in endless range, those twink-
ling points of fire.
The fisher left his skiff to rock on Tamar's glittering
waves,
The rugged miners poured to war from Mendip's
sunless caves;

semper eadem (Latin)—always the same. It was the motto
of Queen Elizabeth.

O'er Longleat's towers, o'er Cranbourne's oaks,
the fiery herald flew;
He roused the shepherds of Stonehenge, the rangers
of Beaulieu.
Right sharp and quick the bells all night rang out
from Bristol town,
And ere the day three hundred horse had met on
Clifton Down;
The sentinel on Whitehall gate looked forth into
the night,
And saw o'erhanging Richmond Hill the streak of
blood-red light.
Then bugle's note and cannon's roar the deathlike
silence broke,
And with one start and with one cry the royal city
woke.

At once on all her stately gates arose the answering
fires;
At once the wild alarum clashed from all her reeling
spires;
From all the batteries of the Tower pealed loud the
voice of fear;
And all the thousand masts of Thames sent back a
louder cheer;
And from the farthest wards was heard the rush of
hurrying feet,
And the broad streams of pikes and flags rushed
down each roaring street;
And broader still became the blaze and louder still
the din,
As fast from every village round the horse came
spurring in;

And eastward straight from wild Blackheath the
warlike errand went,
And roused in many an ancient hall the gallant
squires of Kent.

Southward from Surrey's pleasant hills flew those
bright couriers forth;
High on bleak Hampstead's swarthy moor they
started for the north;
And on, and on, without a pause, untired they
bounded still;
All night from tower to tower they sprang; they
sprang from hill to hill;
Till the proud Peak unfurled the flag o'er Darwen's
rocky dales,
Till like volcanoes flared to heaven the stormy hills
of Wales,
Till twelve fair counties saw the blaze on Malvern's
lonely height,
Till streamed in crimson on the wind the Wrekin's
crest of light,
Till broad and fierce the star came forth on Ely's
stately fane,
And tower and hamlet rose in arms o'er all the
boundless plain;
Till Belvoir's lordly terraces the sign to Lincoln
sent,
And Lincoln sped the message on o'er the wide
vale of Trent;
Till Skiddaw saw the fire that burned on Gaunt's
embattled pile
And the red glare on Skiddaw roused the burghers
of Carlisle.

The Rag-Doll

R. C. Lehmann

The Rag-doll here and the Rag-doll there! take care
of the Rag-doll, do!

She's a dollopy, dumpy, dowdy doll with a grin on
her face for two.

She's a dollopy doll with two stuffed legs—but she's
only got one stuffed arm—

But, oh! take care of the Rag-doll, do, and see that
she takes no harm.

Her face is as flat as a girdle-cake, the tint of her
cheeks is pink;

Her eyes have a fixed and glassy stare that would
make a policeman blink.

Her nose is a blob and her teeth are paint, and I'm
sorry I can't say more

For the looks of the doll who takes her ease all day
on the nursery floor.

But you can't judge dolls by their looks, you know;
this doll has a wondrous way

Of being a Fairy Prince by night, while she's only
a doll by day:

A Fairy Prince with his tossing curls and a smile
that is bright and bold,

And a trusty sword and a waving plume on a helmet
of shining gold.

And forth on his milk-white steed he rides, a gay
and a gallant sight—

He was only a feminine doll by day; he's a regular
Prince by night.

He fights and he curvets all night long at the head
of his troop of men,
And, lo, at the break of dawn he's back, a dowdy
old doll again.

On the following night it is presto, changel and, lo,
she is off to steer
On a ship of her own to the Southern Seas, for now
she's a buccaneer.
There hasn't been seen a Pirate King that ever had
half his scars,
Or caverns so full of round doubloons and jewels
and golden bars.

And nobody chops and lops like him, or sneers with
such curling lips
At the shivering, shrinking, cringing crews, and
the captains of merchant ships.
And he laughs, hal hal when the storm winds blow,
and he never gives way to fear,
This scar-seamed King of the Caribbees who is only
a Rag-doll here.

A Beauty asleep, a Gnome, a Queen, a Knight of the
Golden Spur—
Old Raggy she takes them all in turns: they're one
and the same to her.
She has mounted in haste her chamfroned horse,
and her sword she has girded on,
And has thundered away on a new Crusade to the
towers of Ascalon.

chamfron—the armour for the fore-part of a war-horse.

She has thundered away with the Christian host a
 Saracen town to win,
 But, oh, when the night is half-way through she's
 fighting as SALADIN.
 She's a wonderful changeable doll, in short, as ever
 a mortal knew;
 So I say, take care of the old Rag-doll, take care of
 the Rag-doll, do!

Willow the King

Edward Bowen

Willow the King is a monarch grand,
 Three in a row his courtiers stand;
 Every day when the sun shines bright,
 The doors of his palace are painted white,
 And all the company bow their backs
 To the King with his collar of cobbler's wax.
 So ho! so ho! may the courtiers sing,
 Honour and life to Willow the King!

Willow, King Willow, thy guard hold tight;
 Trouble is coming before the night;
 Hopping and galloping, short and strong
 Comes the Leathery Duke along;
 And down the palaces tumble fast
 When once the Leathery Duke gets past.

"Who is this," King Willow he swore,
 "Hops like that to a gentleman's door?
 Who's afraid of a Duke like him?
 Fiddlededeel!" says the monarch slim;
 "What do you say, my courtiers three?"
 And the courtiers all said, "Fiddlededeel!"

Willow the King stepped forward bold
Three good feet from his castle hold;
Willow the King stepped back so light,
Skirmished gay to the left and right;
But the Duke rushed by with a leap and a fling—
“ Bless my soul!” says Willow the King.

Crash the palaces, sad to see;
Crash and tumble the courtiers three!
Each one lays, in his fear and dread,
Down on the grass his respected head;
Each one kicks, as he downward goes,
Up in the air his respected toes.

But the Leathery Duke he jumped so high,
Jumped till he almost touched the sky;
“ A fig for King Willow,” he boasting said,
“ Carry this gentleman off to bed!”
So they carried him off with the courtiers three,
And put him to bed in the green-baize tree.

“ What of the Duke?” you ask anon,
“ Where has his Leathery Highness gone?”
O he is filled with air inside—
Either it's air, or else it's pride—
And he swells and swells as tight as a drum,
And they kick him about till Christmas come.
So ho! ho! ho! may his courtiers sing,
Honour and life to Willow the King!

the green-baize tree—the cricket bag.

The Black Lamb

W. K. H.

Arrayed in innocence, his friends
Amongst the daisies frisk;
His days as merrily he spends,
As blissful and as brisk,
As though, poor lamb, he did not mind
Thus differing from all his kind.

How white their fleeces in the sun!
How dusk and shadowy he!
Yet no reflection mars his fun,
Or checks his youthful glee.
Light-headed wretch, does he not know
That he is soot, while they are snow?

Pathetic, thoughtless lambkin, wait;
Fast growing up, you'll find
(If e'er you think?) what's meant by fate
And destiny unkind.
The doors of doom none may unlock—
You're born the black sheep of the flock!

Yet, frisky thing, perhaps you are
More wise than I should guess,
And know that colour is no bar
To worth and happiness.
Yours is a case that well may chance
Of triumph over circumstance!



The Londoner's Chariot

Wilfrid Thorley

The Conductor Speaks—

Come board my speeding chariot that bears you for
a crown or two

From shire to shire, by bridge and spire, from Lee
to Muswell Hill;

I pass by ancient palaces, I sweep across a Down or
two.

You'll swear it's worth a crown or two
Before the wheels are still.

From dawn to dark by city streets, with scarlet sides
I hurry down;

Quit sordid care, climb up my stair, and glide with
me along,

And you may dream in Warren Wood or ponder on
a Surrey Down,

My wheels shall beat your worry down
And fill your soul with song.

Choose well your day, and if in doubt just ask some
wise old weather-head;
Take bread and cheese, and, if you please, an apple
and a bun;
And you may revel half a day at Epping or at
Leatherhead,
As blithe as any feather-head
That dances in the sun.

There's pageant in the sky for you. The stately
clouds go sweeping on,
A fleet of sail that braves the gale across the windy
vast;
Anon they seem a host of horse in sudden dust
stampeding on
To find fresh fields for feeding on,
Before the day is past.

And steeples far away you'll spy through veils of
mist that muffle them,
Where old and scarred they rise and guard God's
acre of dead souls;
And round them barley stems that bow as sudden
breezes ruffle them,
And fairy fingers shuffle them
With every wave that rolls.

You'll pass by many an ancient inn, and see the
swinging sign of it;
You'll pass by marts of coster-carts, and gardens
sweet with musk;
And ever as you face the sky you'll see the changing
line of it,

Until the sun makes wine of it,
And drowns the world in dusk.

So, board my speeding chariot and leave your
native soil behind;
I fly like fire from shire to shire, from Sheen to
Seven Kings;
I've got a Spartan at the wheel, another drum of oil
behind;
Though slower wheels may toil behind,
It's you that shall have wings.

To a Butterfly

William Wordsworth

I've watched you now a full half-hour,
Self-poised upon that yellow flower;
And, little butterfly! indeed
I know not if you sleep or feed.
How motionless!—not frozen seas
More motionless! and then
What joy awaits you, when the breeze
Hath found you out among the trees,
And calls you forth again!

This plot of orchard-ground is ours;
My trees they are, my sister's flowers;
Here rest your wings when they are weary;
Here lodge as in a sanctuary!
Come often to us, fear no wrong;
Sit near us, on the bough!
{ We'll talk of sunshine and of song;
And summer days when we were young;
Sweet childish days, that were as long
As twenty days are now.

The Race of the Flowers

W. B. Rands

The trees and the flowers seem running a race,
But none treads down the other;
And neither thinks it his disgrace
To be later than his brother.
Yet the pear-tree shouts to the lilac-tree,
"Make haste, for the Spring is late!"
And the lilac cries to the chestnut-tree,
Because he is so great,
"Pray you, dear Sir, be quick, be quick!
For down below we are blossoming thick!"

Then the chestnut hears, and comes out in bloom,
White or pink, to the tip-top boughs—
Oh, why not grow higher, there's plenty of room,
With the wide blue sky for your house!
And then they begin to sing all together,
Little and big with a beautiful burst,
They sweeten the wind, and paint the weather,
And nobody knows who was first.

White rose, red rose,
Bud rose, shed rose,
Larkspur, and lily, and the rest,
North, South, East, West,
June, July, August, September!
Ever so late in the year will come
Many a red geranium
And chrysanthemums up to November.

But when Winter has overtaken them-all,
And the fogs and the rains are beginning to fall,
The flowers are weary of running their races,
And close their eyelids, and hide their faces,
And under the ground they go to sleep.
Is it very far down? Yes, ever so deep.

The Cloud

P. B. Shelley

I bring fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
From the seas and the streams;
I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
In their noonday dreams.

From my wings are shaken the dews that waken
The sweet birds every one,
When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
As she dances about the sun.

I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
And whiten the green plains under;
And then again I dissolve it in rain,
And laugh as I pass in thunder.

I sift the snow on the mountains below,
And their great pines groan aghast;
And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
While I sleep in the arms of the blast.

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The Elfin Artist

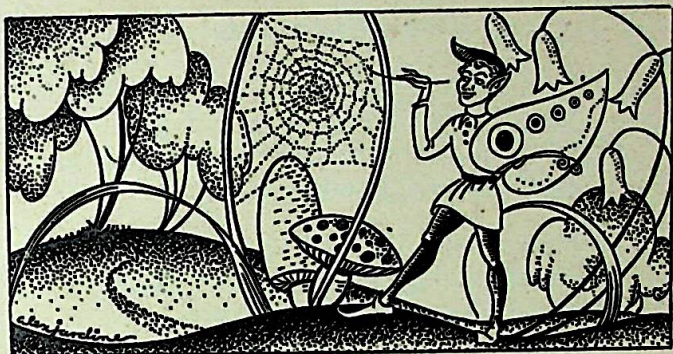
Alfred Noyes

In a glade of an Elfin forest,
When Sussex was Eden-new,
I came on an elfin painter,
And watched as his picture grew.
A harebell nodded beside him,
He dipped his brush in the dew.

And it might be the wild thyme round him
That shone in that dark strange ring;
But his brushes were bees' antennæ,
His knife was a wasp's blue sting;
And a gorgeous exquisite palette
Was a butterfly's fan-shaped wing.

And he mingled its powdery colours,
And painted the lights that pass,
On a delicate cobweb canvas
That gleamed like a magic glass,
And bloomed like a banner of elf-land,
Between two stalks of grass;

Till it shone like an angel's feather
With sky-born opal and rose,
And gold from the foot of the rainbow,
And colour that no man knows;
And I laughed in the sweet May weather
Because of the themes he chose.



For he painted the things that matter,
The tints that we all pass by,
Like the little blue wreaths of incense
That the wild thyme breathes in the sky;
Or the first white bud of the hawthorn,
And the light in a blackbird's eye.

And the shadows on soft white cloud-peaks
That carolling skylarks throw—
Dark blots on the slumbering splendours
That under the wild wings flow,
Wee shadows like violets trembling
On the unseen breasts of snow;

With petals too lovely for colour,
That shake to the rapturous wings,
And grow as the bird draws near them,
And die as he mounts and sings—
Ah, only those exquisite brushes
Could paint these marvellous things..

The Mermaids

We dwell in the Sea-King's ancient hall
Hid deep within the bay,
Where dim groves echo the wind's wild tune,
And whispering waters sway.

Amber and coral and silver and jade
Glisten and gloom through its waves;
The eager sunbeams fill each arch,
And dance in its crystal caves.

Through forests fairer than mortals know
The Sea-King's children rove;
We glimpse the grey whales as they pass,
We watch the ships above.

When flaming noonday gilds the sand
Our gardens we prepare,
And deck with pearl and anemones
The seaweed's purple hair.

And when the moon through dewy veils
Her silver radiance pours,
We silently rise above the sea,
And steal to the dusky shores.

Along the ocean's shimmering verge
Merrily trips our throng,
While soft and faintly as a dream
We sing our midnight song.

But when the billows seethe and hiss,
And the seagulls wheel and screech,
Laughing we call where the surges fall
In thunder on the beach;

With arms upraised we plunge beneath
The tempest's roar and foam,
And glide with mazy movement slow
Back to the Sea-King's home.

About Ben Adhem

Leigh Hunt

About Ben Adhem (may his tribe increase)
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace,
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich, and like a lily in bloom,
An angel writing in a book of gold:—

Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold,
And to the Presence in the room he said,
“What writest thou?”—The vision raised its head,
And with a look made of all sweet accord,
Answer'd, “The names of those who love the Lord.”
“And is mine one?” said Abou. “Nay, not so,”
Replied the Angel. Abou spoke more low,
But cheerly still; and said, “I pray thee then,
Write me as one who loves his fellow men.”

The Angel wrote and vanished. The next night
It came again with a great wakening light,
And show'd the names whom love of God had
bless'd,
And-lo! Ben Adhem's name led all the rest.

Abou is a Persian form of address.

Meg Merrilies

John Keats

Old Meg she was a gipsy,
And lived upon the moors;
Her bed it was the brown heath turf,
And her house was out of doors.
Her apples were swart blackberries,
Her currants pods o' broom;
Her wine was dew of the wild white rose,
Her book a churchyard tomb.

Her brothers were the craggy hills,
Her sisters larchen trees—
Alone with her great family
She lived as she did please.
No breakfast had she many a morn,
No dinner many a noon,
And 'stead of supper she would stare
Full hard against the moon.

But every morn of woodbine fresh
She made her garlanding,
And every night the dark glen yew
She wove and she would sing.
And with her fingers old and brown
She plaited mats o' rushes,
And gave them to the cottagers
She met among the bushes.

Old Meg was brave as Margaret Queen
And tall as Amazon:
An old red blanket cloak she wore;
A chip hat had she on.
God rest her aged bones somewhere—
She died full long ago!

Vitai Lampada *

Sir Henry Newbolt

There's a breathless hush in the Close to-night—
Ten to make and the match to win—
A bumping pitch and a blinding light,
An hour to play and the last man in.
And it's not for the sake of a ribboned coat,
Or the selfish hope of a season's fame,
But his captain's hand on his shoulder smote—
“Play up! play up! and play the game!”

The sand of the desert is sodden red,—
Red with the wreck of a square that broke;—
The Gatling's jammed, and the Colonel dead,
And the regiment blind with dust and smoke.
The river of death has brimmed his banks,
And England's far, and Honour a name,
But the voice of a school-boy rallies the ranks:
“Play up! play up! and play the game!”

This is the word that year by year,
While in her place the School is set,
Every one of her sons must hear,
And none that hears it dare forget.
This they all with a joyful mind
Bear through life like a torch in flame,
And falling fling to the host behind—
“Play up! play up! and play the game!”

* This is Latin for “The Torch of Life”. It is an allusion to the old Greek relay race in which a torch was handed by one runner to the next.

The Fountain

James Russell Lowell

Into the sunshine, full of the light,
Leaping and flashing from morn till night!
Into the moonlight, whiter than snow,
Waving so flower-like when the winds blow!
Into the starlight, rushing in spray,
Happy at midnight, happy by day!
Ever in motion, blithesome and cheery,
Still climbing heavenward, never aweary;
Glad of all weathers, still seeming best,
Upward or downward, motion thy rest;
Full of a nature nothing can tame,
Changed every moment, ever the same.

How Glad I shall Be

Eliza Cook

How glad I shall be when the Cuckoo is singing,
When Springtime is here and the sunshine is warm;
For 'tis pleasant to tread when the bluebell is
springing,
And lily-cups grow in their fairy-like form.
Then we shall see the loud-twittering swallow,
Building his home 'neath the cottager's eaves,
The brown-headed nightingale quickly will follow
And the orchard be grand with its blossoms and
leaves.
The branches so gay will be dancing away,
Decked out in their dresses so white and so pink,
And then we'll go straying,
And playing
And maying
By valleys, and hills, and the rivulet's brink.

How glad I shall be when the bright little daisies
Are peeping all over the meadows again,
And merry 'twill sound when the skylark upraises
His carolling voice o'er the flower-strewn plain;
Then the corn will be up and the lambs will be
leaping,
The palm with its buds of rich gold will be bent,
The hedges of hawthorn will burst from their
sleeping,
All fresh and delicious with beauty and scent.
'Twill be joyous to see the young wandering bee,
When the lilacs are out and laburnum boughs
swell,
And then we'll go straying,
And playing
And maying
By upland and lowland, by dingle and dell.

How glad I shall be when the furze-bush and clover
Stand up in their garments of yellow and red;
When the butterfly comes like a holiday rover,
And grasshoppers cheerily jump as we tread.
All the sweet wild flowers then will be shining,
All the high trees will be covered with green;
We'll gather the rarest of blossoms for twining,
And garland the brow of some bonnie May Queen.
Like the branches so gay we'll go dancing away,
Like our cheeks in the sunlight, and steps on the
sod,
And then we'll go straying,
And playing
And maying
And praise all the loveliness sent by a God.

The Wind in a Frolic

William Howitt

The wind one morning sprang up from sleep,
Saying, "Now for a frolic! now for a leap!
Now for a mad-cap galloping chase!
I'll make a commotion in every place!"

So it swept with a bustle right through a great town,
Cracking the signs and scattering down
Shutters; and whisking, with merciless squalls,
Old women's bonnets and gingerbread stalls.

There never was heard a much lustier shout,
As the apples and oranges trundled about;
And the urchins that stand, with their thievish eyes
For ever on watch, ran off each with a prize.

Then away to the fields it went blustering and
humming,
And the cattle all wondered what monster was
coming.

It plucked by the tails the grave matronly cows,
And tossed the colts' manes all over their brows;
Till, offended at such an unusual salute,
They all turned their backs and stood sulky and
mute.

So on it went, capering and playing its pranks,—
Whistling with reeds on the broad river's banks,
Puffing the birds as they sat on the spray,
Or the traveller grave on the King's highway.
It was not too nice to hustle the bags
Of the beggar, and flutter his dirty rags;
'Twas so bold that it feared not to play its joke
With the doctor's wig or the gentleman's cloak.

Through the forest it roared, and cried gaily,
" Now,
You sturdy old oaks, I'll make you bow!"
And it made them bow without more ado,
For it cracked their great branches through and
through.

Then it rushed like a monster on cottage and farm,
Striking their dwellers with sudden alarm;
And they ran out like bees in a midsummer swarm:
There were dames with their kerchiefs tied over
their caps,
To see if their poultry were free from mishaps;
The turkeys they gobbled, the geese screamed aloud,
And the hens crept to roost in a terrified crowd;
There was rearing of ladders, and logs were laid on,
Where the thatch from the roof threatened soon to
be gone.

But the wind had swept on, and had met in a lane
With a schoolboy, who panted and struggled in vain;
For it tossed him and twirled him, then passed—
and he stood
With his hat in a pool, and his shoes in the mud!

Then away went the wind in its holiday glee,
And now it was far on the billowy sea:
And the lordly ships felt its staggering blow,
And the little boats darted to and fro.

But, lo! it was night, and it sank to rest
On the sea-bird's rock in the gleaming west,
Laughing to think, in its frolicsome fun,
How little of mischief it really had done.

My Native Land

Sir Walter Scott

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
"This is my own, my native land!"
Whose heart hath ne'er within him burned
As home his footsteps he hath turned
From wandering on a foreign strand?
If such there be, go, mark him well;
For him no minstrel raptures swell;
High though his titles, proud his name,
Boundless his wealth as wish can claim;
Despite those titles, power, and pelf,
The wretch, concentred all in self,
Living shall forfeit fair renown,
And, doubly dying, shall go down
To the vile dust, from whence he sprung,
Unwept, unhonoured, and unsung.

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

A Face

Edward Wyndham Tennant

I know a face, a lovely face,
As full of beauty as of grace,
A face of pleasure, ever bright,
In utter darkness it gives light.
A face that is itself like joy,
To have seen it I'm a lucky boy;
But I've a joy that have few other,
This lovely woman is my Mother.

The Fairy's Bower

William Shakespeare

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.
There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.

A Midsummer-Night's Dream.

Titania—the queen of Fairyland.

Sunrise

William Shakespeare

But, look, the morn, in russet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.

Hamlet.

Sunset

William Shakespeare

The weary sun hath made a golden set,
And by the bright track of his fiery car,
Gives token of a goodly day to-morrow.

Richard III.

Jog On!

William Shakespeare

Jog on, jog on, the foot-path way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

The Winter's Tale.

On Christmas Night

Hugh Chesterman

I woke from sleep on Christmas Night,
The sky was clear and the stars were bright,
The moon peeped over the window sill,
And all the house was hushed and still,
Save down in the hall, where Grandfather Clock
Talked to himself with a faint "Tick-tock."
So up to the landing stairs I crept
And passed the room where Bridget slept.
Up in the roof there's a room I know,
An attic where I and Bridget go,
And our books are there on a shelf, in a row.
I stopped at the door and listened and heard
A sound like the sigh when the leaves are stirred
By the soft night wind; and then the beat
Of a tiny drum, and the patter of feet.
And next I caught (but faint and thin)
The elfin notes of a violin.
Below the crack of the attic door
Was a pale blue flame on the wooden floor,
So I put my eye to the lock to see
Whatever this fairy light could be.
And a Christmas Tree came into view,
With a hundred candles burning blue.
And round it circled, three times three,
The merriest, maddest company.
All the folk that I'd met in stories,
Kings and Caliphs, Whigs and Tories,
Elves and Warlocks, pale Princesses,
Fairies, too, in fancy dresses.
Some were ragged; some were dapper;
Shuffle-shuffle, tipper-tapper,

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How they jigged and twirled and turned!
While bluer still the candles burned.
I stood for a second or two outside,
Then pushed the door till it opened wide.
The room was empty: the dancers gone;
Gone was the tree; but the moonlight shone
Cold and white on the attic wall
Where my Story Books stood; and that was all.

Christmas Eve

C. Druitt Cole

On Christmas Eve the little stars
Sparkle and glisten with delight,
Like strings of glitt'ring diamonds,
Across the darkness of the night.

On Christmas Eve the little stars
Dance in their places in the sky;
Ah! I would go and trip with them
If I could only climb as high.

On Christmas Eve the little stars
Sing merry carols all night long;
But O! I am so far away
I cannot even hear their song.

On Christmas Eve the little stars
Sparkle and dance, and sing till dawn;
And I am singing too, because
To-morrow will be Christmas Morn.

NOTES

Robert Browning (b. 1812, d. 1889).

This poet lived at the same time as Tennyson. For many years he resided in Italy, and in his *Home Thoughts from Abroad* he expresses a longing to be home in England for the springtime.

The Pied Piper of Hamelin.—This is a rather amusing poem. Although it is a fairy story, yet we should remember the moral, let us keep our promises.

Robert Burns (b. 1759, d. 1796).

From the poems of Burns included in this book, you will have noted that this poet was a native of Scotland and wrote in the Scottish dialect. He has been unequalled as a song-writer, and one of his best-known songs is *Auld Lang Syne*.

My Heart's in the Highlands.—This poem expresses the deep love of the home country by the exiled Scot and is in sharp contrast to the wander-spirit of such a poem as *Northern Seas*. Burns thought as he wrote, for he had a passionate love for the land of his birth.

William Cowper (b. 1731, d. 1800).

Unlike many poets before him, Cowper selected simple and commonplace subjects for his poems; he saw the beauty in all natural objects. His poem *John Gilpin*, which he wrote in one night, is ever-amusing, but his noblest work is *The Task*.

The Snail.—Cowper took a delight in the sights of outdoor rustic life, and hence one is not surprised that he should have written a poem upon such a subject as this. Notice the rhyming of the final lines of the stanzas.

Thomas Hood (b. 1799, d. 1845).

Hood was the author of many humorous poems, but he was also able to write pure poetry. Among his famous poems are *I Remember*, *I Remember* and *The Song of the Shirt*.

No!—This is an exceedingly clever piece of composition, the initial syllable of the name of a month giving the key to the poem. Hood saw no joy in November, but in *Fairy Music* by Miss Rose Fyleman the fairies sang as they rode on the wild November winds.

Charles Kingsley (b. 1819, d. 1875).

You will enjoy reading the delightful story he wrote for children, *The Water Babies*. Kingsley was the author of many famous novels including *Westward Ho!* and *Hereward the Wake*. He wrote little verse, his best-known poems being *The Sands of Dee* and *The Three Fishers*.

John Keats (b. 1795, d. 1821).

Unfortunately this poet lived only to the age of twenty-six, and the realm of literature is the poorer for his early death. Keats wrote *To a Nightingale*, perhaps the finest lyric in our language, and his ode to *Autumn* is another fine example of his work.

Meg Merrilies.—The simple life and comfort of this lonely old gipsy makes a strong appeal to us all. Notice she gave away her mats—a true gift brings joy to the giver.

Rudyard Kipling (b. 1865, d. 1936).

This author will always rank high, and his *Just So Stories* and *The Jungle Book* make very enjoyable reading.

The Secret of the Machines.—Kipling lived in an age of machinery, and in this poem he indicates the mighty power of modern machines. Note the warning that these powerful monsters should be kept as servants to the mind of man.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (b. 1807, d. 1882).

No other poet's works are so famous in the school and in the children's homes throughout the English-speaking world as Longfellow's; he told a story in simple language. As a mark of affection, the children of his own town presented Longfellow with a chair made from the wood of the Village Blacksmith's chestnut tree. He was an American by birth, and he delighted the world with his famous poem *Hiawatha*.

Lord Macaulay (b. 1800, d. 1859).

Macaulay was a great essayist, and among his prose writings are the famous essays on *Clive* and *Warren Hastings*.

The Armada.—The poet vividly tells us how the news of the coming of the Spanish Armada was spread throughout England. Macaulay has been described as "a true genius for narration", and his mastery of descriptive detail is evident in this poem. It is unfortunate that the poem was never finished.

Sir Walter Scott (b. 1771, d. 1832).

Undoubtedly Scott was the greatest poet and novelist Scotland has produced, and the impressive Scott Memorial in Edinburgh indicates the high regard his fellow-countrymen had for his valuable contribution to literature. His most important poems are *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, *Marmion*, and *The Lady of the Lake*. He wrote a series of novels known as the *Waverley Novels* which include such well-known works as *Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth*, *Rob Roy*, and *The Talisman*.

My Native Land.—These lines are taken from a long poem entitled *Lay of the Last Minstrel* where the story of Border feud is written as if told by an aged minstrel. This extract rings with true patriotism—Why is the person who is not a patriot said to be "concentrated all in self"?

William Shakespeare (b. 1564, d. 1616).

From his birthplace at Stratford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire, Shakespeare went to London where he spent many years of his manhood. Later he returned to his native town. He was famous as a writer of plays and when you are older you should take every opportunity of seeing these plays performed. "The name of Shakespeare is the greatest in our literature; it is the greatest in all literature."

He wrote thirty-seven plays, many sonnets, and several poems. His plays may be grouped into:—

- (1) Comedies (which end happily for the principal character):
Merchant of Venice, A Midsummer-Night's Dream.
- (2) Tragedies (which end in the death of the principal character):
Hamlet, Macbeth.
- (3) Historical Plays (founded on events in English and Roman History): *King John, Julius Cæsar.*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (b. 1809, d. 1892).

Succeeding Wordsworth as Poet Laureate, he was one of the outstanding poets of the nineteenth century. One of Tennyson's most famous works is *In Memoriam*, a poem in which he laments the death of a great personal friend.

The Brook.—In this poem, the brook itself tells its own story. What other poems in this book are similarly planned? Notice that the words and rhythm suggest the sounds of the flowing brook thus indicating the skill of the poet in his mastery of language.

When reading poems by Tennyson it is always interesting to note his frequent use of the same letter to begin several of the words. This is called *alliteration*. In *The Brook* you will be able to find many examples like sudden sally, twenty thorps, &c.

William Wordsworth (b. 1770, d. 1850).

This famous poet of Nature was born and lived in Cumberland amid the beautiful scenery of the Lake District, hence we can understand that his works reflect his true feelings concerning the enjoyments of quiet country life. Thus Wordsworth gave us such poems as *To the Daisy*, *To the Cuckoo*, and *To a Sky-Lark*. So close to Nature did Wordsworth live that he wrote:

'Tis my faith that every flower
Enjoys the air it breathes.

Daffodils.—Wordsworth narrates the scene created by a mass of these spring flowers along the shore, and the lasting impression the sight made upon the poet. It is worthy of note that in *The Thistle* one solitary plant gave the poet his theme.

